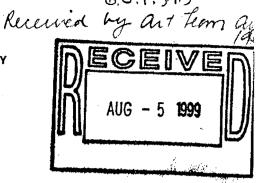


DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
THE U.S. ARMY CENTER OF MILITARY HISTORY
103 THIRD AVENUE
FORT LESLEY J. McNAIR DC 20319-5058

AUG 0 4 1999



604313

Mr. Kenneth Klothen
Executive Director
Presidential Advisory Commission on
Holocaust Assets in the United States
901 15th Street, Northwest, Suite 350
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Klothen:

Thank you for your recent letter to the Assistant Secretary of the Army (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) requesting assistance to locate sources relating to the U.S. Army's involvement with the acquisition and disposition of Holocaust era assets following World War II.

We have searched our files for information on the questions that you raised. The Center's documents on this subject are largely secondary, but my staff does have knowledge of relevant records located in the National Archives and Records Administration facility (NARA II) at College Park, Maryland. All original Army documents from World War II and occupation periods dealing with Holocaust era assets are stored at NARA II. Most of the documents are on the second floor of the building. The material is organized by records groups, and most of the Army post-World War II occupation records for the European Theater are in Records Group 260. This group is subdivided by occupation zones (Germany and Austria) and then further subdivided by subordinate agencies and departments. Generally, the files are arranged in chronological sequence.

Most of the Army's earlier research into Holocaust era assets focused on the occupation of Germany. This lasted much longer than the occupation of Austria and was a much larger operation. Nonetheless, there is useful information related to Austria in Records Group 260, Boxes 166, 396, 397, 398, 430, 442, 487, and 488. A subsection of Records Group 260 is labeled "Records of the U.S. Allied Commission for Austria (USACA) Section of Headquarters, United States Forces in Austria." We anticipate that these records will answer most of your questions concerning the acquisition and disposition of material seized in Austria after the war.

The "Hungarian Gold Train" has commanded considerable attention from a variety of agencies, because of the political and economic factors that influenced the restitution of Hungary's gold and other assets after the war. There are many references to this subject in the following areas: Records Group 218 (Records of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff), Box 72; Records Group 260 (Records of the Office of the Military Governor, United States), Boxes 396, 397, 398, 399, 424, 429, 430, 440, and 702; Records Group 331 (Records of Allied Operational and Occupation Headquarters, World War II), Box 1; and Records Group 338 (Records of United States Army Commands), Box 13. You may also want to review Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946, Volume VI,

<u>Eastern Europe: the Soviet Union</u>, Publication 8470. In addition, I have attached a short report on Hungarian Gold prepared by our historians for the earlier interagency group on Nazi assets.

Information regarding the arrest and recruitment of Mr. Albert Thoms (vice Thomas), the former director of the Reichsbank's Precious Metals Department during World War II, exists in Records Group 260 (Records of U.S. Occupation Headquarters, World War II; Records of the Office of the Military Governor, United States), Boxes 423, 440, 470, 629, 630, and 650. Because Mr. Thoms was a minor official in the German government, it is possible that there are further interrogation reports and biographical summaries in other records known to the NARA archivists.

Portions of the questions that you raised may also be answered in the two recent studies prepared by the interagency group on Nazi assets, specifically the <u>Preliminary Study on U.S.</u> and Allied Efforts to Recover and Restore Gold and Other Assets Stolen or Hidden by Germany During World War II and the <u>U.S. and Allied Wartime and Postwar Relations and Negotiations With Argentina, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and Turkey on Looted Gold and German External Assets and U.S. Concerns About the Fate of the Wartime Ustasha Treasury.</u>

The archivists at NARA II are very helpful and you may contact them at 713-7250. I advise working with Mr. Greg Bradsher (via e-mail at james.bradsher@arch2.nara.gov), who is the NARA expert on Holocaust Assets records and deals directly with all interested researchers. For high-level support, if needed, Dr. Mike Kurtz, the affable deputy archivist of the United States (at mike.kurtz@arch2.nara.gov) is extremely knowledgeable. Dr. Kurtz is on the Army's historical advisory committee and completed his doctoral dissertation on U.S. cultural restitution policies and actions regarding the property looted by Nazi Germany, especially art works.

I will provide a member of my staff to help your teams initiate their research at NARA II. Additionally, your researchers have access to the resources here at the Center, and we would be pleased if they would confer with our historians and curators at anytime.

I hope this information is of assistance, and we look forward to working with you further on this matter.

Sincerely,

John S. Brown

Brigadier General, U.S. Army

Chief of Military History

THE U.S. ARMY AND HUNGARIAN GOLD

When elements of the 3d Infantry Division discovered the gold cache for the Hungarian National Bank at Spital am Pyhrn, Austria, it marked the beginning of an international tempest that lingered for the next eighteen months. Like the Merkers treasure that was found a month earlier, the initial reports of what was discovered at Spital varied to include "100,000,000 Swiss francs," or "about 35 tons gold and other valuables," or "gold bullion and coin said to weigh 29,875.984 kg." Unlike the Merkers experience, however, the assets recovered at Spital all came from one source, and there was complete documentation for these assets.

All of the monetary assets were sent to the Foreign Exchange Depository (FED) on 16 May 1945, probably because these assets were recovered by a unit from 12th Army Group, which was operating primarily in southern and central Germany. The Hungarian gold became Shipment Number 20 in the FED's

¹ The cache also included extra food rations, gasoline, numerous horses, and over 100 automobiles, along with all the bank employees, their families, and a small detachment of Hungarian soldiers.

² ETOUSA, cable E-43164, to SHAEF (Main), 11 May 45, in RG 331 (box 1), file "SHAEF/G-5/1"; AFHQ, cable FX-29179, to USFA, 28 Jul 45, in National Archives Records Group 260 [hereafter cited as RG 260] (box 396), file "910.12 Cables, Incoming, USFET"; USFET (main), cable S-13977, to AGWAR, 26 Jul 45, in RG 338 (box 13), file "123/2 Captured Bullion and Art Treasures 1945."

register. The total acquisition included 633 cases of gold bullion and coin, plus 54 containers of currency and valuables. Detailed bank documents also were included in this shipment.

In addition to the material which was clearly the gold reserves from the Hungarian National Bank, the FED also inventoried an assortment of gold and silver bars and coins, jewelry, currency, and securities—all removed from "safe-keeping deposits." No Jewish property looted by Nazis in Hungary was identified in this shipment to the FED. All of the assets included in Shipment Number 20 belonged to either the Hungarian National Bank or individual depositors. In the early summer of 1946, the FED prepared a detailed inventory of these assets in which individual owners were identified by name. The 50-page inventory was cross-referenced by depositor

[&]quot;Register of Valuables in the Custody of the Foreign Exchange Depository, Frankfurt a/m Germany," 9 Feb 48, in RG 260 (box 399).

G-5, SHAEF (main), cable S-92053, to Combined Chiefs of Staff, 21 Jun 45, in RG 331 (box 1); USFET, cable PV-7109, to AGWAR, 31 Aug 45, in RG 260 (396), file "910.12 Cables, Incoming, USFET."

Leland Howard, et. al., memorandum to Lt. Col. H.D. Cragon, 15 Aug 45 (also known as the "Howard Report," for the U.S. Treasury official who led a team of experts from the Treasury Department and the Bank of England in conducting a survey of the FED's gold assets), in RG 260 (box 440), file "940.60 Gold Report and Original Work Sheets."

[&]quot;Report on Contents and Origin of Certain Shipments Received in the Foreign Exchange Depository," [Nov/Dec 45], in RG 260 (box 424), file "940.40."

⁷ USFET, cable S-6908, to AGWAR, 5 Jul 46, in RG 260 (box 397), file "910.13 Cables, Outgoing, USFET."

and asset.*

The restitution of Hungarian assets became a prominent issue by early 1946. Indeed, one of the reasons for the expeditious return of the Hungarian gold may have been the result of aggressive lobbying by the Hungarians--particularly Nicolas Nyaradi, the Hungarian Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of Finance, who made frequent visits to the FED, the Office of the Military Government of Germany, U.S. (OMGUS), and Washington, D.C. Economic necessity, however, was the principal cause for returning the Hungarian gold in August 1946.

Hungary's financial health was deteriorating rapidly, and the decision was finally made in June to expedite the restitution of Hungary's gold. The State Department also informed Hungary that it would encourage U.S. occupation forces in Germany and Austria to facilitate the restitution of non-monetary assets and to consider releasing surplus property in Europe. It is likely too that a third reason for the quick restitution of monetary assets to Hungary was political. The

^{*} See RG 260 (box 430), file "940.4020 Shipment 20 Book 2."

^{*} U.S. Minister in Hungary (Schoenfeld), telegram to the Secretary of State, 15 Feb 46, in <u>Foreign Relations of the United States, 1946</u>, vol. 6 (<u>Eastern Europe</u>; the Soviet Union), Department of State Publication no. 8470 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1969), p. 258 [hereafter cited as <u>FRUS</u>].

¹⁰ Acting Secretary of State (Acheson), telegram to Secretary of State in Paris, 15 Jun 46, in <u>FRUS</u>, pp. 315-16.

Hungarian foreign minister claimed that "the Hungarian Communists were endeavoring to make political capital out of the non-recovery of this property and were using the situation to weaken pro-American sentiment in Hungary." The point was reinforced by the U.S. minister in Hungary, who noted that the communists were making "effective use of argument that Western Powers including America are disinterested in this country's welfare and that therefore Hungary's survival depends only on Soviet good will."

Releasing the gold assets to Hungary was a unilateral decision on the part of the United States. Such a decision could be made because the gold was not captured by German forces, but rather had been surrendered by Hungarian nationals to U.S. forces. The international accords in January 1946 did not apply to this restitution action, even though Hungary had been a belligerent allied with the Axis Powers. Unlike later returns of monetary assets to foreign governments, which were directed by the Tripartite Gold Commission, this one was referred to as a direct restitution of monetary gold to Hungary.

The "Hungarian Gold Train" left Frankfurt on 4 August and arrived in Budapest the following day. The total shipment

¹¹ Acting Chief of the Division of Southern European Affairs, memorandum of conversation with Hungarian Minister, 11 Jan 46, in <u>FRUS</u>, p. 251.

¹² U.S. Minister in Hungary, telegram to Secretary of State, 9 Feb 46, in FRUS, p. 256.

comprised 28.2 tons of monetary gold, valued at \$32,154,000.13

Included in this restitution action was an assurance by Hungary that any gold later determined to have been looted would be returned to its rightful owners.14

In spite of very careful accounting procedures, a small amount of coins and currency were returned to Hungary which were not part of the original assets of the Hungarian National Bank. These items included 50 Turkish pounds, 504.95 Japanese yen, and 1207 colonial pesos. The coins and currency apparently were returned to the FED late in 1946.

There were additional restitution issues involving
Hungary. Following close on the heels of the return of the
monetary gold to the Hungarian National Bank, Mr. Nyaradi
approached the Deputy Military Governor of OMGUS for a "token
flow" of other Hungarian assets. OMGUS brought the question
before the Allied Control Council, probably in accordance with
the June directive from the State Department, but the French
insisted that this was a governmental decision, which

¹³ Valuations are 1945 prices: \$35 per troy ounce.

[&]quot;' Complete collections of documents concerning this restitution action are in RG 260 (box 430), file "940.4020 National Bank of Hungary"; RG 260 (box 429), file "940.4020 History of the Hungarian Gold." Other related documents may be found in RG 260 (box 440), file "940.60 Howard Report," and RG 260 (box 702), file "July 1946."

¹⁵ ACC Hungary, cable Z-4593, to USFET, 15 Nov 46. Four weeks earlier, the overage was reported to be 2252.5 Turkish pounds, 502.95 Japanese yen, and 1205 colonial pesos; see: ACC Hungary, cable Z-4392, to USFET, 21 Oct 46. Both documents are in RG 260 (box 396), file "Cables, Incoming, USFET."

effectively halted any further direct restitutions to Hungary. OMGUS, however, expressed its concern that delays would only exacerbate Hungary's problem and suggested that the United States should proceed unilaterally. It is unclear how or when Hungary received its other property, such as its 100 automobiles and hundreds of horses seized in May 1945 with the assets of the Hungarian National Bank.

Prepared by: Mr. R. Cody Phillips, DAMH-ZCB
[This report is current as of 27 February 1997.]

¹⁶ LTG Lucius D. Clay, Deputy Military Governor, memorandum to Ambassador Murphy, 22 Sep 46, subj: Hungarian Restitution; in RG 260 (702), file "September 1946."

The Department of State refers to the notes of March 16 and 902.441 8-1255
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PRESIDENTIAL
ADVISORY COMMISSION
ON HOLOCAUST ASSETS
IN THE UNITED STATES

Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States

Edgar M. Bronfman

Kenneth L. Klothen Executive Director

August 4, 2000

Assistant Secretary P.T. Henry Department of the Army Manpower and Reserves Affairs #2E594 The Pentagon Washington, D.C. 20310

Dear Mr. Henry:

I am writing to enlist your support in determining whether record of interest to the Commission still exist as part of the U.S. Army Intelligence and Security Command's Investigative Records Repository (IRR). I have been informed that, although many Nazi-era records have been released to the National Archives, some of these documents may yet be held by the U.S. Army.

A list of individuals is enclosed. The Commission is interested in determining what, if any, relationship exists between these persons and victims' assets. We are also interested in gaining access to the records of the 215th Counter Intelligence Corps (CIC) Detachment. Documents relating to this unit for the period 1945-1950 are of particular interest, because it was the unit that encountered, arrested and interrogated Kurt Becher, a prominent member of the SS who had been active in Budapest.

Finally, the Commission is interested in determining whether records exist pertaining to assets of the Manfred Weiss family or Manfred Weiss Company, which were removed from Hungary to Germany and Austria in 1945.

I would appreciate your help in arranging a meeting between Commission staff and the appropriate officials at Fort Meade to determine whether the relevant records exist and, if so, to help speed our review of these documents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kenneth L. Klothen Executive Director

	•		
	Baky, Laszlo	DOB: 13 September 1898	POB: Budapest, Hungary
٠	Becher, Kurt	DOB: 12 September 1909	POB: Hamburg, Germany
	De Koranyi, Istvan	DOB: Unknown	POB: Unknown
	Endre, Laszlo.	DOB: 1 January 1895	POB: Abony, Hungary
	Ferenczy, Laszlo.	DOB: 8 March 1898	POB: Felsoviso, Hungary
	Hain, Peter	DOB: 31 May 1895	POB: Karolyfalva, Hungary
	Jaross, Andor	DOB: 23 May 1896	POB: Csehi, Hungary
	Kettlitz, Herbert	DOB: Unknown	POB: Unknown
	Klages, Otto	DOB: Unknown	POB: Unknown
	Kolosvary-Borcsa, Mihaly	DOB: 1896	POB: Kolozsvar, Hungary
	Koltay, Laszlo	DOB: 10 November 1902	POB: Dombovar, Hungary
	Szalasi, Ferenc	DOB: 6 January 1897	POB: Kassa, Hungary
	Toldy, Arpad	DOB: 2 January 1898	POB: Kiskoros, Hungary
	Vajna, Gabor	DOB: 5 November 1891	POB: Kezdivasarhely, Hungary

DOB: 1914

Vajta, Ferenc

POB: Unknown



_DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

310th MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BATTALION 902D MILITARY INTELLIGENCE GROUP, USAINSCOM 8544 6TH ARMORED CAVALRY ROAD FORT GEORGE G. MEADE, MARYLAND 20755-5955

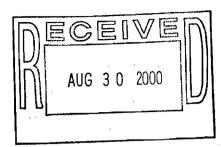
REPLY TO ATTENTION OF

August 25, 2000

Office of the Commander

Mr. Kenneth L. Klothen
Executive Director
Presidential Advisory Commission on
Holocaust Assets in the United States
901 15th Street, NW, Suite 350
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Klothen:



I am responding to your request of Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Patrick T. Henry, dated August 4, 2000.

We have conducted a thorough search of the records at the Investigative Records Repository to identify the information you have requested. Searches included a check of the Defense Clearance and Investigative Index and a physical search of the indices for our microfilm holdings.

The search for information relating to the 215th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment (using the methods described above) identified nothing specifically identifiable with the unit, its operations, investigations or unit history. A check with Mr. Richard F. Myers of the Nazi War Criminal Records Interagency Working Group Staff indicated that operational unit records of the 215th Counter Intelligence Corps Detachment are in the custody of the National Archives and Records Administration. He indicated that members of your commission staff should contact Mr. William Cunliffe, of the Interagency Working Group Staff, in order to review these records. He further indicated that the commission staff should contact Greg Bradsher of the National Archives for information about pertinent records concerning the Manfred Weiss Company. Mr. Cunliffe can be reached at (301) 713-7165 x261, and Mr. Bradsher's phone number is (301) 713-7250 x245.

The search of the Microfilm index did verify that there were five files and two index cards responsive to your request. I have attached the best copies I have available for these records. Bear in mind that this microfilm was created between 1951 and 1968. The film represents many years of investigative and operational activities and has been in use since the Investigative Records Repository received it in 1969. As a result, much of the film is of poor quality. As part of the process of transferring this film to the National Archives, the images it contains are being digitized. This will allow for enhancement of the images and possible better resolution. For now, these are the best images that we have available.

All the Army classified material contained in these records has been declassified and we have coordinated with a third party agency on classification issues. At issue was reference to a particular source used in the collection of material. While we were able to declassify the

particular source used in the collection of material. While we were able to declassify the material, we could not declassify references to the source. It is our belief that this context will have no impact on your interest in this material, but should you require the information, please contact us via secure means and we will provide you with the information concerning the organization involved.

We stand ready to assist you at any time in identifying records of the Investigative Records Repository. Should you have any questions, Mr. Swicegood is my Point of Contact on this request and he can be reached at 301-677-2445.

Jasey B. Briley
Lieutenant Colonel, US Army
Commanding Officer

Eight Enclosures: Copies of:
NWCRIWG Letter dtd 11 Aug 2000
Source Data Card – Toldi, Arpad
Source Data Card – Endraes, Laszlo
Dossier XE010916 – Kettlitz, Herbert
Dossier XE061392 – Jaross, Andor
Dossier XE232094 – Vajta, Ferano
Dossier XE014987 – Becher, Kurt
Dossier XE007652 – Vajna, Gabor

Copies Furnished:

Commander, 902d Military Intelligence Group Commander, US Army Intelligence and Security Command Assistant Secretary of the Army for Intelligence Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs

NAZI WAR CRIMINAL RECORDS INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP 8601 Adelphi Road, College Park, Maryland 20740

NNT/NARA

Thomas H. Baer Los Angeles

Michael J. Kurtz (Chair) National Archives and Records Administration David Marwell

Richard Ben-Veniste Washington DC

Harold J. Kwalwasser

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Office of the Secretury of Defense

Eli M. Rosenbaum Office of Special Investigations Department of Justice

John E. Collingwood Federal Bureau of Investigation William H. Leary National Security Council

David Patterson

Elizabeth Holtzman New York

Kenneth J. Levit Central Intelligence Agency Department of State

August 11, 2000

Andy Swicegood 310Ml Battalion

Ft. George G: Meade, MD 20755

Andy:

In response to the letter from Kenneth L. Klothen, Executive Director of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States, dated August 4, we suggest that you include in your reply the fact that operational unit records of the 215th CIC Detachment are in the custody of the National Archives. Members of the Commission staff should contact William Cunliffe of the IWG staff if they wish to review these records.

In regard to the question concerning the Manfred Weiss Company, the Commission staff should contact Greg Bradsher of our staff for information about pertinent records. Cunliffe can be reached on (301) 713-7165 x261, and Bradsher's phone is (301) 713-7250 x245.

Hope this information is helpful.

Richard F. Myers **IWG Staff**

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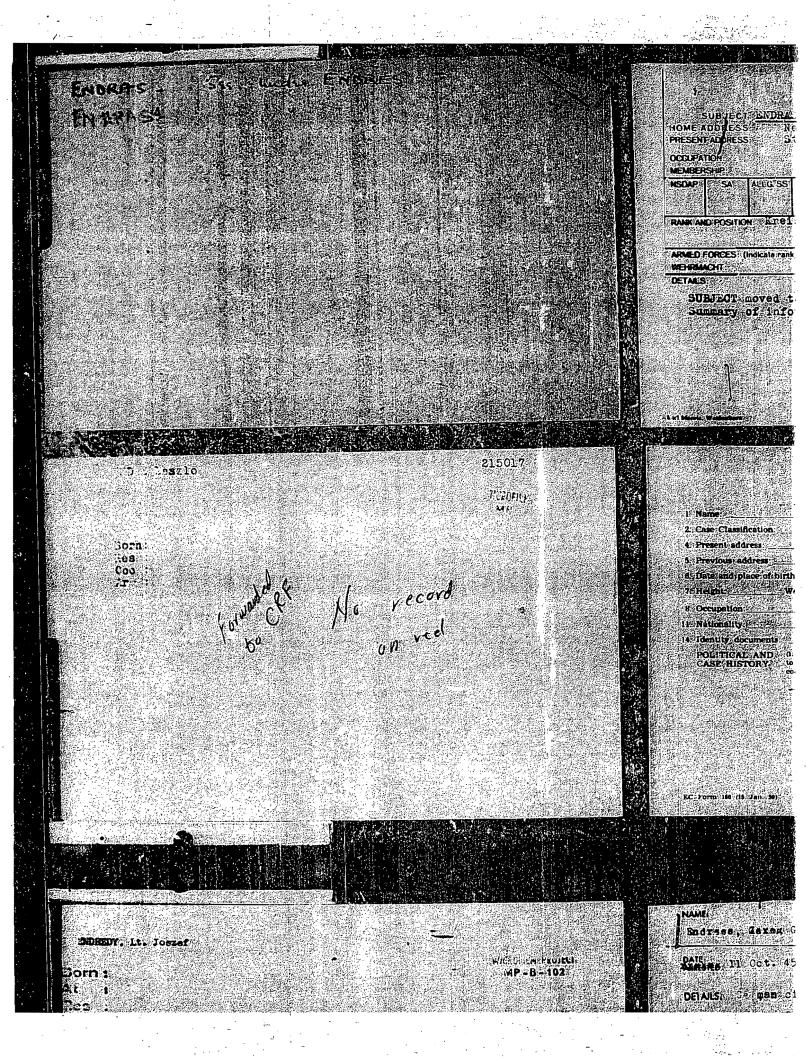
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4 August 1983

Commissioner for Jewish Affairs, mentioned in minutes of Practice Lirchen Hungarian Administrative Council meeting.

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Arrest Report

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DOSSIER NO. XE06/392

As of 14 August 2000 all material included (Oate)

in this file conforms with DA policies currently in effect.

Marilyn B. Mekinney 14 August 2000 (Signature) (Date Signed)

Printed Name) (Grade)

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